

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 0328

EO 1162: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, LI

SUBJ: PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S NEW CABINET

SUMMARY: ON JANUARY 12 PRESIDENT TOLBERT ANNOUNCED HIS NEW CABINET. THERE ARE ONLY FOUR CHANGES, THREE NEW FACES AND SOME SURPRISES. THE CHANGES WERE IN AGRICULTURE, FINANCE, LANDS AND MINES, AND POSTAL AFFAIRS; THE NEW FACESS ARE AT AGRICULTURE, LANDS AND MINES, AND POSTAL AFFAIRS. THE SURPRISES WERE IN WHO STAYED. END SUMMARY

1. ON JANUARY 12 PRESIDENT TOLBERT ANNOUNCED HIS NEW CABINET. COMPLETE LIST OF MINISTERS FOLLOWS:

ACTION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS LEVEE K. MOULTON

AGRICULTURE LOUSI A RUSS,
VICE JAMES T. PHILLIPS, JR.

COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND TRANSPORTATION WILLIAM E. DENNIS, JR.

EDUCATION ADVERTUS A. HOFF

FINANCE JAMES T. PHILLIPS, JR.
VICE EDWIN WILLIAMS

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS C. CECIL DENNIS, JR.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE OLIVER BRIGHT

INFORMATION, CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND TOURISM EDWARD B. KESSELY

JUSTICE LAWRENCE J. MORGAN

LABOR, YOUTH AND SPORTS J. JENKINS PEAL

LANDS AND MINES AARON HOLMES
VICE A. E. NYEMA JONES

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND URBAN RECONSTRUCTION
EVERETT JONATHAN GOODRIDGE

NATIONAL DEFENSE HARRY A. GREAVES
VICE ALLEN H. WILLIAMS

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS D. FRANKLIN NEAL

POSTAL AFFAIRS ABEODU JONES
VICE MCKINLEY A. DESHIELD

PUBLIC WORKS GABRIEL J. TUCKER

STATE FOR PRESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS E. REGINALD TOWNSEND

2. PHILLIPS HAS DONE A BANG-UP JOB AT AGRICULTURE, AND TAKES TO
FINANCE THE POLITICAL CLOUT THAT ED WILLIAMS COULD NOT SUPPLY.
PHILLIPS' ENTIRE EDUCATION AND CAREER IN GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN IN
AGRICULTURE. HE HAS, HOWEVER, MANIFOLD BUSINESS INTERESTS.

3. RUSS MOVES UP FROM THE NO. TWO SPOT AT AGRICULTURE. HE IS NOT
AS SMOOTH AS PHILLIPS NOR AS WELL DISPOSED TO THE U.S.

4. HOLMES ALSO MOVES UP FROM DEPUTY MINISTER. HE IS BOTH PROFES-
SIONALLY (A GEOLOGIST WITH EXCELLENT ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS) AND
POLITICALLY WELL QUALIFIED. HE WAS ON THE "RIGHT SIDE" OF THE
WOLOGISI CONCESSION TERMS CONTROVERSY, AS HIS PREDECESSOR WAS NOT.
THE LATTER, NYEMA JONES, HAS BEEN RUMORED TO BE IN TROUBLE
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FOR MONTHS. REPORTEDLY PRESIDENT TOLBERT AND OTHERS IN THE GOL
WERE CRITICAL OF HIS ROLE IN THE WOLOGISI CONCESSION NEGOTIATIONS,
I.E. THE AGREEMENT WAS TOO GENEROUS AND BRINGS THE GOL
INSUFFICIENT RETURNS.

5. ABEODU JONES, THE WIFE OF FIRED MINISTER OF LANDS AND MINES
NYEMA JONES, IS WELL KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY. SHE HAS A PH.D. FROM
NORTHWESTERN. OUR EVALUATION IS THAT HER ADMINISTRATIVE TALENTS

ARE SUSPECT.

6. GREAVES HAS LATELY BEEN SUPERINTENDENT OF BONG COUNTY. EARLIER HE WAS DEPTUY MINISTER OF DEFENSE. HE HAS LONG BEEN A FAVORITE OF TOLBERT, AND HAS BEEN MARKED FOR PROMOTION FOR SOME TIME. WHY ALLEN WILLIAMS HAD TO GO IS UNCLEAR. HE THOUGH HIS POSITION WAS SAFE AS LATE AS A WEEK OR TWO AGO. HE HEARD THE NEWS OF HIS REPLACEMENT ON THE RADIO.

7. "BIG MAC" DESHIELD, STILL A POWER, LEAVES THE CABINET BY CHOICE; HE HAS WANTED TO SLOW DOWN. HE WILL DEVOTE FULL TIME TO HIS JOB AS GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE TRUE WHIG PARTY. PRESS REPORTS OF THE CHANGES NOTE THAT DESHIELD WILL CONTINUE TO ATTEND CABINET MEETINGS IN HIS NEW CAPACITY.

8. THERE WERE SEOME SURPRISES ON OTHER SIDE OF THE LEDGER, I.E. IN THOSE WHO RETAINED THEIR JOBS. BILL DENNIS AT COMMERCE HAD RECENTLY BEEN PUBLICLY ADMONISHED BY THE PRESIDENT TO GET INFLATION STOPPED OR HE WOULD GIVE SOMEONE ELSE A CHANCE TO TRY HIS HAND AT IT. APPARENTLY DENNIS' FIRM REACTION, MAINLY AIMED AT EXPATRIATE BUSINESSMEN, SATISFIED THE PRESIDENT OR AT LEAST PERSUADED HIM TO LEAVE DENNIS IN PLACE SO AS NOT TO CREATE ANY DOUBT ABOUT GOL SUPPORT OF HIS VIEW OF THE EXPATRIATES' RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRICES.

9. HOFF WAS PUT IN AS MINISTER OF EDUCATION, WE HAD BEEN TOLD, AS A SOP FOLLOWING HIS RELIEF AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY. HE WAS SUPPOSED TO GO IN MID-DECEMBER, BY WHICH TIME OLIVER DUNCAN, HIS RECENTLY-APPOINTED DEPUTY, BACK FROM THE STATES, WOULD BE READY TO TAKE OVER. WE HAVE NO EXPLANATION FOR WHY THIS SCENARIO, WHICH WAS GIVEN US BY A CABINET OFFICER, WAS NOT CARRIED THOROUGH.

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10. PEAL AT LY AND S WAS RUMORED AS LIKELY TO GO. HE APPEARED NOT TO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED MUCH AND THE LIBERIANIZATION PROGRAM SEEMED TO BE SOMEWHAT ADRIFT.
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